

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended):        An image information processing apparatus capable of entering image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

      said image information processing apparatus comprising:

      communications means for receiving the image information; and

      control means which determines whether or not the attribute information and the image data are arranged in a predetermined sequence[[,]] from header information pertaining to the image information received by said communications means, and which immediately decompresses the image data included in the image information when the attribute information and the image data are determined to be arranged in the predetermined sequence.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An image information processing apparatus capable of entering image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

said image information processing apparatus comprising:

control means which stores, ~~into header information pertaining to image information,~~ information indicating that attribute information and image data are arranged in a predetermined sequence into header information pertaining to the image information, and which produces the image information by means of storing the attribute information and the image data in a predetermined sequence; and

output means for outputting the generated image information.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The image information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

said output means exchanges, ~~with a receiver device which is to send the image information,~~ negotiation information in connection with a layout sequence of attribute information and image data with a receiver device which receives the image information, and

said control means generates the image information on the basis of a result of ~~exchange~~ of the exchanged negotiation information.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended):       An image information processing apparatus capable of entering image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

said image information processing apparatus comprising:

communications means which exchanges[[,]] with a sender device for sending the image information, negotiation information in connection with a layout sequence of the image data and the attribute information, and which receives the image information; and

control means which immediately decompresses the image data included in the image information upon receipt of a message indicating that the attribute information and the image data are arranged in a predetermined sequence, as a result of exchange of the negotiation information.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended):       An image information processing apparatus which produces image information in an image file format, the format enabling storage of image data and attribute information thereof in arbitrary positions,

      said image information processing apparatus comprising:

      output means which exchanges[[,]] with a receiver device which is to send the image information, negotiation information pertaining to a layout sequence of the attribute information and the image data, and which outputs the image information, and

      control means which arranges the attribute information and the image data in a predetermined sequence on the basis of [[the]] a result of ~~exchange~~ of the exchanged negotiation information, thereby producing the image information, and which outputs the image information to the output means.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended):        A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a program for causing a computer to perform processing for entering and decompressing image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

the processing comprising:

a determination step of determining whether or not the attribute information and the image data are arranged in a predetermined sequence[[,]] from header information pertaining to the entered image information; and

a decompression step of immediately decompressing the image data included in the image information when in the determination step the attribute information and the image data are determined to be arranged in the predetermined sequence.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a program for causing a computer to perform processing for producing image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

the processing comprising:

a sequential information storage step of storing, ~~into header information of the image information~~ information indicating that the attribute information and the image data are stored in a predetermined sequence into header information of the image information;

an image information generation step of producing the image information by means of storing the attribute information and the image data in [[a]] the predetermined sequence; and

an output processing step of outputting generated image information.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended):        A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a program for causing a computer to perform processing for entering and decompressing image information in an image file format which enables storage, in arbitrary positions, of image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

the processing comprising:

a negotiation processing step of conducting ~~, with a sender device which sends the image information,~~ negotiations in connection with a layout sequence of the image data and the attribute information with a sender device which sends the image information;

a decompression ~~operation~~ step of immediately decompressing the image data included in the received image information, when ~~through the negotiation processing step~~ it is reported that the attribute information and the image data are arranged in a predetermined sequence through the negotiation processing step.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a program for causing a computer to perform processing for producing image information in an image file format which enables storage[[,]] in arbitrary positions, [[of]] image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data,

the processing comprising:

a negotiation processing step of conducting, ~~with a receiver device which sends the image information~~, negotiations in connection with a layout sequence of the image data and the attribute information with a receiver device which sends the image information;

an image information generation step of producing the image information by means of arranging the attribute information and the image data in a predetermined sequence[[,]] on the basis of [[the]] a result of negotiations performed in the negotiation processing step; and

an output processing step of outputting produced image information.